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Edited by PETER HUGH REED

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December

The American MUSIC LOVER

DECEMBER, 1942 • VOL. IX, No. 4

The Carol Season

Editorial Notes

Columbia suggests, and wisely too, "this Christmas — it's Music. For never before has music meant so much to so many of us." No one will deny this. Never in history has an army in training shown such a need and desire for music as our own. Yes, this Christmas, it is music which offers escape from the stresses and strains that war imposes. No one can give a more cherishable gift this year than records, for they will keep on giving through the months and years to come, and the giver may well never be forgotten.

Christmas and music suggests carol singing. There is a joy in singing carols that cannot be described in words — it must be experienced. It is a communal feeling, because we share it with others and because everyone joins in unmindful of his or her musical likes or dislikes. While we here at home and our Allied friends in their homes sing the old familiar carols this year, we can be certain that our boys will be raising their voices in a happy chorus somewhere far off in strange lands. And as they sing the old tunes, those carols which perhaps they have sung since early childhood, and which their parents and forefathers for as far back as most of us can trace also

sang, they will feel that much closer to home and the ones they love. No one can describe the spiritual feelings that such communal music-making engenders. It is a healthy sentiment that carries around the whole world. All mankind is linked by the singing of Christmas carols.

There was a time when carol singing was not confined to the Christmas season, but was participated in at other periods of the year. Not only were carols sung on most festive occasions but they were sung at one time in the home by the family and groups of visiting friends. Back in the 15th and 16th centuries, when every home in England is said to have had its singers, carols were as familiar as the so-called heart-songs or sentimental ballads were in the parlors of the Victorian era. One wishes one could help revive carol singing at those other periods of the year when it was at one time the custom to sing them.

That wish carries us back a dozen years to a Christmas party at a cozy English home, for it was the hostess of that occasion who first uttered it. This was at the home of Sidney and Eva Mary Grew in Birmingham. Mrs. Grew had assembled a group of young people to sing carols and to talk about them. During

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the evening she imparted the history and meaning of these Christmas songs in a charmingly informal manner. Remembering her discourse has decided me in favor of repeating it here.

"The origin of carols lies in extreme antiquity, at a point far removed from the dawn of the Christian era. Humanity has always marked recurrent events by celebrating them as religious festivals; and at the turn of the year, when days begin to lengthen and nights to shorten, men, who in primitive conditions of life always feared the dark, celebrated the change in a great gathering for singing and dancing. Our Christmas and Epiphany festivals in the church are coincident with the old Pagan festivals of the 'Coming of the Light'. That is one reason why our Christmas carols in particular are filled with the spirit of joy.

"The church took over pagan habits and customs, though not until it had tried to abolish them, giving up that attempt only when it found the task impossible. Several words and names that we employ in connection with our Christmas (*Christ mass*) are actually relics of Paganism. We love the alternative name for Christmas, — Yule. But Yule is absolutely pre-Christian; it is ancient Gothic, going back to the time of the Druids. And so when we burn the Yule log on Christmas Eve, we are perpetuating a rite that was observed in our forests thousands of years ago, and we are also helping the old Pagan name to survive. Even the special prominence given to holly and mistletoe at Christmas is a pagan revival; and in that carol, *The Holly and the Ivy*, there is quite a casual blending of Paganism and Christianity; for while the chorus retains the old Pagan spirit, the verse embodies thoughts concerning the sorrow and gladness, the glory and the suffering of Christ.

"Then again, when carollers tell us in their songs that they come a-wassailing, they speak in the very manner of their pre-Christian forefathers; for wassailing is literally drinking plenteously in the lusty manner of the old Teutons. For hundreds of years there was a special carol, called the Wassel, which boys sang from house to house on Twelfth-Night; and the

very oldest carol known today ends with the Saxon exchange of healths, *Wesseyl*, or *Drinebayl*. This ancient carol was sung as far back as the days of King John in honor of Christmas; but it is far older than that.

"I can only tell my listeners about the earliest Christmas carols by taking some pieces we all know, and telling you in detail what scholars have laid down concerning them. This information may well make you enjoy singing them more and more. Let's look at *Good King Wenceslas*. The melody of that song is more than eight hundred years old; and King Wenceslas was a real person, only he was not a king, but a duke; and he was Duke of Bohemia.

"The true Christian spiritualizing of Christmas carols was probably brought about by Saint Francis of Assisi, who was an Italian contemporary of our King John. Saint Francis portrayed the story of the Nativity in his little church, setting up by the altar a crib or creche; and from that moment Christmas carols seem to have taken on more and more purely the thought of the Infant Jesus. Then the mediaeval Miracle plays, dealing largely with the events of Christ's life, had many songs which in time were abstracted and used as carols. Two of these are *The Holy Vigil* and *The Cherry Tree* (or *Joseph Was an Old Man*). Even the ancient Guild plays gave us carols, some mystical, as the *Corpus Christi* and some incidental or dramatic, as those of the *Three Wise Men*. The *Corpus Christi* dates from about 1450; it was found written on a page in a London grocer's larder! The famous *Boar's Head Carol* was printed in 1521, in the collection made by Wynkyn de Worde, which was the first collecting of these songs ever made. Some carols, such as *We Three Kings of Orient Are*, *The First Noel*, *A Virgin Unspotted*, and *The Seven Joys of Mary*, are called narrative carols. The loveliest of the old pieces are those that blend worship and aspiration with thoughts of helpless infancy and protecting motherhood. *I Saw Three Ships* (like *Good King Wenceslas*) is a relic of folk-song. See *Amid the Winter Snows* and *Good Christian Men, Rejoice* are ex-

amples of carols written after the Reformation, when composers of these songs were more concerned to point to Christ's mission of atonement than to anything else.

"A hymn deals with the church's doctrine of teaching. A carol is, first and last, a song of direct praise. Hymns, of course, may be songs of praise and adoration; but they have always a tone of solemnity and serious purpose that is not just the one for the carol. Hymns belong to the act of worship, and their place is, I suppose, strictly the church itself. The carol, historically regarded, belongs to out-of-doors, or to celebrations that are not a part of the authorized church service. But the chief difference between them is this, the hymn may be of any mood, while the carol must be bright and joyous. The *Gloria in excelsis* ('Glory to God on high, and in earth peace', believed to have been sung by the angels during the night of Christ's nativity) was a carol, and whenever these words, which are incorporated in the Mass of Communion Service, are set by composers, the music written for them is never hymn-like, but always joyous in the manner of the carol."

Thus ended Mrs. Grew's short talk on carols, which thereafter stimulated her listeners' interest in the singing of them. And it is with that thought in mind that we repeat her short "lecture" (as she called it), in the hope that it will stimulate my readers in the singing of carols and in acquiring some recordings of good carol singing.

Speaking of recordings takes us back to the discs which the English Singers made more than a dozen years ago. Some of these can still be obtained, or at least they could until very recently. Despite the age and poor surfaces of those recordings, they still are enjoyable. No group of singers has ever quite approached the English Singers in their exquisitely nuanced intimacy of performance, the perfect blending and balance of tonal expression. There were five carols in their American album of records, which Roycroft originally issued and which later were sponsored by The Gramophone Shop in New York. The five carols were *Wassail*

Song, Down In Yon Forest, Corpus Christi, The Holy and the Ivy, and We've Been Awhile A-Wandering. The joyous spirit of the first and last is irresistibly projected by the English Singers. But the most cherishable of the carols is the ineffably beautiful *Corpus Christi*, which alone among carols remains an oddity, since it is not bright and joyous but strangely dolorous and deeply moving. Its sentient beauty has been heightened by the arrangement of Peter Warlock, and it is in this arrangement that we hear it sung by the English Singers. (There is another recording of this carol, which is equally well sung by the B.B.C. Chorus of London, and which has been issued here on Decca discs 25630.)

There are other and more modern recordings of carols which have found favor with record buyers. At the head of these we would place the album, issued by Victor (set C-32), called *Christmas Carols of Many Lands*, sung by the Vienna Choir Boys, or the Wiener Saengerknaben — one of the oldest European musical institutions, organized by a decree of the Emperor Maximilian I in 1498. The purity of the boys' voices and the simplicity of their performances lends their records universal appeal. In this album we find a unique group of carols: *Angels We Have Heard* (Old French); *Ayapo* (Indian); *Noel* (old French); *Adeste Fidelis* (Portuguese); *Christmasnight Song from the Vintschgau* (Tyrol, about 1600); *The Gate of Heaven Opened* (Tyrol, about 1700); *Silent Night* (Austrian); and, for good measure, a German folk-song which has widely used as a carol, *Maria auf dem Berge* (Silesia, about 1700).

The Madrigal Singers, under the direction of Lehman Engel, made two lovely carols, *Mid-winter* and *Singe We Noel Once More*; (Columbia disc 321-M) the former, by Gustave Holst, is a setting of a familiar poem by Christina Rossetti, and the latter is a 16th-century tune stemming from southwestern France. And, of course, there are three comparatively unfamiliar carols sung by the Westminster Choir, which Columbia issued last month (disc 17351-D), among which the Andalusian Carol, *Song of the Christmas Presents*, is

quite irresistible. Then there is an album which Victor brought out last December, called *Carols for Christmas Eve*, sung by the Victor Chapel Choir (set P-96), a set which is misleadingly titled since it contains Christmas songs and hymns as well as carols. The singing here is not so persuasive as we might like it to be; it lacks the silky smoothness and fine *a cappella* nuancing of the English Singers and the Madrigal Singers, but it is characteristic of the type of choral singing we hear all over at Yuletide, and for this reason will undoubtedly appeal to many. Victor's set P-2, on the other hand, called *Christmas Carols*, played by Lew White, the organist, with chorus, does not command our admiration, for the manner of presentation with bells, chimes, etc., smacks too much of the trumped-up sort of thing we get too often in Grade B movies. If lacking in the refinement of the Madrigal Singers, the Lyn Murray Singers are nonetheless enjoyable for their simplicity and directness in the singing of a popular group of carols in Columbia's recently issued set C.94 (four 10-inch discs, price \$2.50), although we could have dispensed with the bells used here; however, they are not offensive. This album contains: *Adeste Fideles*; *Noel*; *Silent Night, Holy Night*; *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*; *Joy to the World*; *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*; *Oh, Little Town of Bethlehem*; and *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*.

CHRISTMAS RECORD LISTS

Every record enthusiast has by this time received a copy of Victor's four-page colored brochure listing the records which this company is concentrating its manufacturing efforts on at the present time, and which it suggests are the ideal presents for Christmas. It is regrettable that Victor was unable to issue a special list of new recordings for the Holidays this year, but since the difficulties of production are so great it is understandable that the company would wish to catch up on the production of the many fine recordings issued in the past.

Several dealers and readers have asked us to comment upon the special list which Victor has sent out for the Holiday trade.

A casual glance tells us that the company's undoubtedly chosen this list of recordings because most of them have sold well. The dearth of chamber music leaves one apprehensive that this — the ideal type of music for the phonograph — is to be foolishly and needlessly curtailed. Must the purveyors of music in these difficult times act on the principle that the minority must give way to the law of majority?

Victor's one new album release — the Schnabel-Stock performance of Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No. 4* — can be highly recommended as a fine gift. Next in line, comes the Rubinstein-Heifetz-Fuerman performance of Schubert's *Trio in B flat* — a consummate and enduring performance of some of the most cherishable music that Schubert bequeathed to mankind. Next, there is Toscanini's magnificent reading of Brahms' *First Symphony*, of which our good friend, W. R. Anderson of *The Gramophone* has said: "This remarkable performance (so vivid, illuminated and warming) is, let us say, in celebration — or should we say, in memory? — of what man could be, if he cared." Then there is Montoux's splendid reading of Rimsky-Korsakov's colorful *Scheherazade*, and Kipnis' rich-voiced singing in his album of Russian Folk Songs. There are many other worthy sets in the Victor list, but these five stand out perhaps because they were most recently surveyed. Three single discs that we would like to recommend are Toscanini's finely played recordings of the Preludes to Acts 1 and 3 from *La Traviata*, Myra Hess' inimitable performances of Bach's *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring* and a Scarlatti sonata, and E. Robert Schmitz' well-styled interpretations of two Debussy pieces — *Clair de lune* and *La Cathédrale engloutie*. The latter offers some of the finest piano reproductions to be found on any existent record.

Columbia is to be congratulated on its December list, which contains several of this company's finest album sets. We can think of no gift of more enduring worth than the new recording of Mozart's *Quintet in G minor*. Here is music of poignant beauty, deeply felt expression and pre-eminent strength.



SOME RECORDED

ORGAN MUSIC

AUGUST MACHELBEGHE

When organ music is mentioned, one immediately thinks of Bach, and rightfully so: some of the most glorious pages of organ music were written by him. Bach was an organist at a time when the instrument was at the height of its glory, he knew and understood the organ, and he knew how to make it speak.

But it is also true that other masters did exist who, if not quite as great when measured with the same yardstick, nevertheless created works of importance. Had it not been for the works of Scheidt, Pachelbel, and Buxtehude, for example, the writings of Bach might well have been impossible. Nearly all of Bach's organ works are definitely modeled on Buxtehude, Pachelbel and others of his fore-runners. This is especially true of the chorale preludes, and one has to consider the works of these masters in order fully to understand Bach. Consideration in this case means hearing, and so we shall concern ourselves with some works available on records.

Perhaps one of the most characteristic of Pachelbel's chorale preludes is *Von Himmel hoch*. This chorale prelude, like most of the composer's works of a similar nature, is in two parts. In the first part the *cantus firmus* (chorale melody) appears in the pedals under a highly florid counterpoint derived from the motives of the chorale itself, the whole giving a pastoral impression; in the second part the

chorale melody is treated soberly in a fugal exposition. The only recording of this splendid work is to be found in the album *Studies in Organ Tone*, made by the Aeolian Skinner Company, and issued by Technichord Records. It is played by Ernest White, musical director of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin in New York, and very adequately recorded by Technichord. Incidentally this album, containing as it does a talk on two discs by G. Donald Harrison (one of the foremost organ designers of our day), should be of special interest to all organ enthusiasts. In the record Harrison takes us "behind the scenes," so to speak, and tells us about the individual voices of the organ and how they combine to make the sound effects that form the tone of the whole instrument. Those unfamiliar with organ construction will find these recordings very useful in developing an appreciation of the instrument.

Another Pachelbel recording, *Wie schoen leuchtet die Morgenstern*, is played by Weinrich on the Praetorius organ of Westminster College, Princeton, and is to be found in Musicraft album 9, which also contains Buxtehude's chorale *Von Gott will ich nicht lassen*. It would not be a bad idea for those interested in organ music to acquire the whole Musicraft album, which is a set of four discs devoted to the old masters, although I do not always agree with Weinrich's interpreta-

tions, which tend to be too precise. Then too the Praetorius organ is a Baroque-type instrument of very small dimensions, and is more often than not recorded too intimately.

This brings us to the question of the use of the Baroque organs versus the use of larger modern organs. While the Baroque organ of course is the ideal instrument for works of the kind under discussion, it must be stated at once that unless one travels to Europe to hear some of the fine old instruments one can not form a true idea of their sound. The "Baroque" instruments in this country are modern adaptations of the principles propounded in the Baroque period.

Briefly explained, such instruments were light, having a preponderance of overtone-corroborating stops making for the clarity of expression so necessary to polyphonic music, and also making for possibilities of tonal mixture. The organs of the Romantic period, especially the English and American organs, leaned toward a preponderance of so-called 8-foot or fundamental-tone stops. This resulted in the heavy, greasy quality we have come to associate with "organ tone." This tone is entirely unsuited to polyphonic music, but is ideal for the blocks of chords and homophonic melodies of the Romantic era. The new instruments, such as those created by Mr. Harrison, embody both ideas and thus become ideal, inasmuch as they permit the rendition of both types of works. (I do not mean by this the organs of Princeton and Harvard, which are Baroque-type instruments pure and simple).

It is all very much the same as the development of the orchestra itself. One would not dream of playing a Haydn or Mozart symphony with the full modern orchestra, including all the brasses, all the woodwinds, and all the percussive accessories.

Similarly with the organ. Organs have (or should have) the full resources necessary to perform all types of compositions. Most of the newer ones are built that way. The chief difference between the orchestra and the organ is that the organist is his own conductor, performer, but above all his own orchestrator. And so it often hap-

pens that the poor devil, finding himself absolute master of those wonderful resources, goes berserk, and pulls stops indiscriminately, when a more judicious and understanding use of these resources would be infinitely more successful.

Hence the controversy (if such it is) about the Baroque and modern organ. It boils down to the idea of having practically half the orchestra walk off the stage (as all of us have witnessed countless times) when a work of Mozart or Haydn is about to be performed.

To return to the chorale preludes: those by Bach are among the greatest pages of organ literature. It is true that "If you would know Bach study his chorale preludes." Those works are Bach just as much as the Psalms are King David.

One of the best known chorale preludes is *O Mensch beweine dein Suende gross* (from the *Orgelbuechlein*). In this chorale, chromatic passages are combined under a rather florid *cantus firmus* to give the impression of unbearable grief. (It is noted that Bach nearly always depicts distress by chromatic passages. Observe, for instance, *Durch Adams Fall* and *Das alte Jahr vergangen ist.*) Everywhere the harmonies, characterized by an abundant use of diminished intervals, enforce this impression of sadness. This composition receives its best treatment at the hands of Albert Schweitzer in Columbia set 310. Unfortunately this is a "society" set and single discs are not available from it. The same volume contains 13 of the most representative chorales, including the magnificent *Am Wasserflussen Babylon* (which—except for a too intimate recording—also receives adequate treatment by Weinrich on Musicraft disc 219) and the truly devotional *Schmoecke dich O liebe Seele*. Schweitzer undoubtedly is one of the foremost authorities on Bach, but, with the exceptions cited, his interpretations unfortunately tend to be dull, and the organ of St. Aurelie in Strasbourg does not help matters too much. Still it is a volume that might well be included in every representative library.

Running a very close second in the reading of *O Mensch* is Biggs' recording

on the Baroque organ of Harvard University (Victor disc 15889). This is one of Biggs' best performances in the monumental set *The Little Organ Book*.

Another chorale prelude embodying the same idea of poignancy is *Das alte Jahr vergangen ist* (*Orgelbuechlein*). According to Harvey Grace, Bach does not carry out the mood of the hymn, which is one of joy at the coming of the new year, but rather clings to one phrase "*vergangen ist*." In a more recent survey, Taylor claims that Bach had no specific purpose at all since he had used the same chromatic harmony (usually associated with the grief motive) in the setting of the chorale for actual congregational use.

It may well be that Bach wanted to give musical expression to the spirit of meditation inherent in the idea of New Year's eve. If you can still obtain Decca disc G20472, by all means do so, for it was recorded at the organ of the Thomaskirche of Leipzig (Bach's old organ), and is played by Gunther Ramin, who certainly catches the spirit of the work. The other side of this disc contains the perfectly delightful *In Dulci Jubilo* of the *Orgelbuechlein*, likewise played by Ramin in the same impeccable manner. Otherwise you will have to be satisfied with the Biggs recording (Victor 17459). Not that it isn't as good a recording, but rather that Biggs' performance is one of three on the same side, with no separation to indicate where one number leaves off and the next begins, so that the problem of dropping the pickup just at the right spot has its difficulties.* This wouldn't be so bad if the other two chorales were well performed, but they are no more than pedestrian in their interpretation.

Among the lighter chorale preludes, there are three which certainly need to be mentioned. First is the Schuebler chorale *Wachet auf ruft uns die Stimme* from the Cantata 140. In the organ version, the melody is given to the left hand and should be sung as the tenor sings it in the cantata; the figuration, which might well depict the dancing of Zion's daughters, as Parry

suggests, is in the right hand; and the bass of course is in the pedals.

There are three recordings available: one by Biggs (Victor disc 16729), one by Weinrich (Musicraft disc 216), and one by Commette (Columbia disc 69875). We may immediately dismiss the Columbia version in favor of the newer Victor and Musicraft versions. Of these two, I prefer Biggs' rendition, although I have a quarrel with him not so much on the score of the omitted repeat, as because of his registration of the *cantus firmus*, in which he uses too many of the higher pitched stops. This tends to obscure the florid counterpoint of the right hand, and after all the melody is supposed to be in the tenor. In my opinion Weinrich plays too fast, thus destroying the lilting rhythm of the work, and the brittle quality of his organ gives me an impression of standing in an exceedingly small room. Moreover, this organ is recorded much too intimately; an organ needs more breathing space.

Secondly, and for sheer naiveté, we must recommend *In Dulci Jubilo, nun singet* (Peters Volume IX, No. 12), in which the sustained bass might well depict the fixed star over Bethlehem, and the counterpoint gives the impression of shepherds' pipes. This is well played by Biggs on Victor 15729. Incidentally the same record contains also our third choice in this group of lighter chorales, an excellent rendition of *Nun freut euch lieben Christen gemein*, and a rather commonplace version of *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland*.

Finally, although it is not a chorale prelude, we would like to mention an organ transcription of a passage of one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of all choral works—the *St. Matthew Passion*. It is the finale as transcribed by Widor and it is played by Charles Courboin on Victor disc 14321. Many, of course, will object to the organ solo version of this ending, but we must confess that we always get a great thrill out of it. Courboin plays it very well on the grand organ of Wanamaker's in Philadelphia. And it is the only satisfactory instance we know where the engineers have succeeded in capturing that wheezing giant on records.

*This problem can be solved by marking a line in the record with a wax-type red pencil.



THE SPIRITUAL DRAMA IN

MOZART'S G MINOR QUINTET

By SIDNEY GREW

So very far is the *G minor Quintet* removed from the clear, bright, vigorous facile, and clever Mozart — the Mozart of everyday, that it almost seems the work of another individual. And actually it is that, for it is the work of the authentic Mozart stirred to the depths of his being and forced to realize and express himself, and not a production of the gifted purveyor of music for the general public or cultured private patrons. The everyday Mozart often leaves us dissatisfied at concerts when he is played clumsily, because we feel that he is working only with his mind; but the true Mozart never does that, and when he gives himself to us in the way he does in this quintet, we realize that he is working with his inner being, and we respond to him with our own inner being. The music, being subjective, is therefore essentially romantic.

The *G minor Quintet* is as a *sonata tragica* or a *symphonie pathétique*. It is, in the issue, a manifestation of defeat and failure. Its "subject" is something of so powerful and unsettled a nature that not even the composer's artistic will or the operative genius of conventional musical forms can bring the work to an unmistakably joyous conclusion. But the quintet is in no way problematic. It is no "Hamlet" among musical compositions; and it is only in respect of the finale that one can imagine much diversity of opinion.

When we endeavor to explain a work of art by some detail in the life of the artist, we lay ourselves open to ridicule.

Most likely we shall be attacked with the asseveration that art lies too deep for anything contemporary in the life of the artist to affect it, and told plainly that if we do see in a work the influence of some contemporary event or happening, our vision must be very shallow. People are prepared to allow that the Hamlet group of plays may be explained by Shakespeare's melancholy and his sense of disappointment in early middle life. They will explain certain attributes of Beethoven's works by the composer's deafness — the brusqueness of his music, its impatience, frequent extreme local emphasis, occasional obscurity, and so forth. Schuman's remarkable outburst of song-writing in the months immediately following his marriage is universally allowed to be due to the ease of mind and emotional ecstasy growing out of the marriage. But that is about as far as people will go; and in the case of Mozart, it has been the custom for a hundred years not only to deny that the events of his life had any influence on his music, but actually to express surprise that a man should so completely obliterate the world and forget all about himself whenever he sat down to write.

The 19th century looked on Mozart as a kind of unconscious cherubic individual, quiring to himself artless and effortless strains of song. But the few individuals who really knew a good deal about the man and his work had a different notion of the matter; and bit by bit we are all

modifying our old opinions—all, that is, except those of us who have lived too long in the former conception of Mozart to alter. And so it happens now that when we come across a work of his that strikes us as being exceptionally profound or ambiguous, we endeavor to locate some personal experience of the composer's that may explain how and why he was inspired to make it. But we are not easily satisfied. We accept nothing that does not square with what we know already of Mozart's character as a man, or that does not throw a new light upon his art.

The Death of Leopold

If, then, any "occasion" impelled Mozart to the composition of the *G minor Quintet* it was the death of his father. Leopold died on May 26, 1787. The quintet was finished twelve days earlier, on the sixteenth, and it was probably thought about within the week preceding the sixteenth. The death of Leopold was sudden and unexpected. During the first three weeks of May there was no idea that the old man might not go on living for years. But he had been very ill in the month of April; so ill that it was thought he could not recover, and he and his family were reconciled to his passing. Mozart wrote him a brave letter while he lay on what was thought must be his deathbed; but he was deeply grateful when the danger passed, and his mind reacted buoyantly to the relief.

Now the shock and strain of the April illness would compel in him an intense realization of the love that existed between himself and his father. And this, coinciding with his increasing perception of the delay in his spiritual development, would compel in him a still more intense realization of the bad effect his father's actions—though born of paternal love and pride—had had on him in this respect in his childhood. Moreover, just at this moment Mozart happened to be free of financial anxiety (the freedom did not last long), and he was unusually happy because of certain recent artistic successes. Thus while an event in his life forced him to analytical and retrospective observation of his past career and present con-

dition, his material and artistic position was such that he could work out the result of that observation in his art.

Mozart loved his father, and his father loved him, in a way rare among men; and though his present mood of passionate regret over his thwarted spiritual development must have been accompanied by a keener knowledge than ever that it was through the mistaken actions of his father that he was suffering now, he did not love his father any the less, nor did he in the slightest degree condemn him. On the contrary, he probably pitied him, as he pitied himself; and so to the filial love which I find in the music of the quintet I add filial compassion.

This is a very interesting conclusion. Hundreds of composers express passionate love, from Wagner down. Brahms expresses domestic love, and the love of friends. Beethoven expresses universal love. Bach, for whom God was in many ways just a sublime father, expresses paternal love. Handel also expresses the same. Mozart expresses here, according to my reasoning, filial love; and I know of no other musician who does the same.

It is not for me to end on that note, because although this filial love interpenetrates the music, it is not its predominant quality. The chief subjects of the quintet are pain, regret, and a measure of that divine discontent which inspires men to supreme spiritual achievements.

Let us examine the work itself. The first movement appeals to me mainly as an expression of pain, and that seems of a kind that is born of regret.

A Survey of the Music

This emotional condition is in no way exceptional in music. The art is full of such dolor. But the mood here is excitable and the situation is self-centered—the composer is concerned exclusively with himself; and in that respect the situation is very exceptional indeed; it is, in fact, unhealthy: and feeling the presence here of familiar "tragedy" and "pathos" of musical thought, I wonder already what the finale of the work will be.

The apparent smallness of the form and style of the composition intensifies its

pathetic qualities. It stands on the other side of the vast emotional utterances of the 19th century; and though it is as big, actually, as they are, it seems slight until one has adjusted oneself to the late 18th-century proportions, and this moves our imaginative pity; for the distress revealed seems youthful.

The second subject—that tender melody which begins with the two-fold statement of a little descending motive and then leaps up by a minor ninth—is what I chiefly carry in mind to the next movement. But I am very deeply affected by the broken tutti phrases which lead first into the development section and then again into the coda. There is perhaps a touch of bitterness in this coda; and I feel that under more favorable inspirational auspices the movement might have ended simply in the mood of an elegy. But it is no elegy; its blending of the plaintive and the agitated is too poignant for that. And moreover, the elegiac in art is never self-centered.

A Great Minuet

Mozart cuts the first movement off with two abrupt, harsh chords. But the two chords have more in them than a mere dismissal of the first movement. They open the way for a differently characterized sequel. Mozart puts his minuet here in the second place. It is necessary that he should exercise some opposition to what has pulled him down in the first movement; and out of the inspiration of those two abrupt chords he proceeds to establish what can be called an atmosphere of resistance, if not indeed of defiance.

It is very wonderful how the composer pours into the stereotyped minuet-and-trio form the varied elements of his new emotional condition. All the flights of the music are short, and everything has to be played through twice, with a conventional reprise of the minuet after the trio; yet the progression is as true as if the work were a great lyric ode written by a great poet.

If the manuscript of the slow movement had been lost, we should have said—from our knowledge of the other movements—that it must have been a piece of

lyrical loveliness. When grief predominates in a lengthy composition, or when the general mood is one of restlessness, the creative artist invokes pure beauty for a spell; and the law that commands him to do this is the one that made Shakespeare bring into *Macbeth* at a very intense moment the grim humor and very original personality of the Porter.

The opening then of the *Adagio ma non troppo* (played with muted strings) bears out this idea. The melody he begins with is inexpressively tender and full of great beauty. But almost at once the music hesitates. The music is to be no vast interlude of a conscious and deliberate loveliness. A spirit of yearning enters, until the mood becomes that of gentle lamenting. The cadence of this first section is followed by a theme that expresses grief. And the continuation of the new section is exceedingly strange; it is a phase which, with its quietly oscillating accompaniment, could belong to a serenade. Not once in a thousand examples of good chamber music (string quartet or quintet) from the 18th or early 19th centuries do we find such a passage as this—except when, as once in a while with Haydn, an entire movement will be as a serenade. This unusual melody, however, subsides upon a long note, under which the other parts move gravely; and whatever it means, it is nothing more than a passing fancy, the key to which has never been given the world.

The Meaning of the Adagio

The ending of the slow movement expresses resignation, and the piece as a whole expresses love. Mozart never got so close to the bedrock of humanity as he does here, nor did any other composer after him until Beethoven arrived at maturity.

The lengthy introduction which precedes the final allegro is very earnestly expressive music. Not only is it one of the most earnestly expressive passages in the whole of Mozart, but it is probably equal in this respect to any other composer. There is no spirit of complaint in this song. The self-centered grief of the first movement is overcome and banish-

ed. But in it I do not feel any of that innermost quality of art which we call consolation; and though I do feel a mood of expectancy in the music, I cannot feel this mood is marked by confidence.

And then the allegro, when it slips into being after the exquisite close of the introduction; proves to have no joyousness. Its brightness and animation have a worldly tinge; and so the finale, contradicting

the song which introduces it, is disturbing, leaving one dissatisfied, as its composer was dissatisfied. This allegro tries to be a dance movement, but forced to embody something of restlessness and distress. It is excited, and its efforts to become exultant are vain. The issue is defeat; and since such a defeat belongs to the tragic in art, the quintet is, in my way of reasoning, a *sonata tragica*.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE GRAMOPHONE SHOP ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RECORDED MUSIC.
Simon and Schuster. New York, N. Y.
1942. 558 pp. Price \$3.95

▲ The first edition of this monumental undertaking was published in 1936, after its editor, R. D. Darrell, had spent several years in its compilation. Mr. Darrell is one of the highest authorities on recorded music, and his book was a master-work of completeness, marred only by a few unimportant errata, inevitably concomitant with a pioneer work. Its one weakness was the omission of music the authorship of which is unknown. This matter has been corrected in the present edition by listing such works as these under the heading "Anonymous". A questionable feature of this edition is the gratuitous criticism of some of the composers, particularly as this is criticism of a type Ernest Newman has aptly called the "sensitized plate".

The present edition is obviously based on Mr. Darrell's, but one can look in vain for any mention of the debt that the present editor owes to him. This is unpardonable, for whatever distinction the present volume owns is due to the foundation laid by Darrell. The editor even states that "the same method of listing is followed as in the original (1936) edi-

tion", on the snobbish assumption that all the purchasers of his book will have access to its predecessor, which contained explanatory notes of a Websterian thoroughness. It is really too bad that Darrell could not have done this second edition.

A casual perusal of the book has unearthed over a half-hundred errors, some serious. Furthermore, most of the errors of the 1936 edition remain uncorrected, despite the fact that the present reviewer took the trouble, as did others, to reply to Darrell in his plea for suggestion and corrections.

Errors that the manufacturers persist in retaining their catalogues should have been corrected. A glaring instance is the listing of Stokowski's recording of Shostakovich's *Prelude in E flat minor as Prelude in A flat* in both the Victor and Columbia catalogues. Another instance is the listing of Scriabin's *Prelude, Op. 37, No. 2* as in F sharp major instead of B major.

The book is a masterpiece of inconsistency. Foreign recordings which have not been available here for many years (and probably never will be again) are listed, apparently merely because the editor has not been formally advised of their withdrawal; whereas domestic recordings

only recently withdrawn, and consequently still available at some shops, new or second-hand, are omitted. Some composers are listed, with the information that no recordings of their works are available. By the same token, the names of dozens of more important composers should also have been given space. On the other hand, some important composers have been entirely omitted, although represented on discs at the present time, such as Steffani, Scandelli, Cipriano da Rore and Orazio Vecchi. Uribe-Holguin is given space, but one can look in vain for the more important Andres Sás. These instances are but a few that can be recalled at the present writing.

One serious error occurs right off the bat on page one. *The Symphony in E flat major, Op. 10, No. 3*, by Karl Friedrich Abel is listed under Joseph l'Abbé.

The Victor disc (13590) of Grétry's *Pantomime from Zémir et Azor* is listed under *Denys le Tyran*, whereas the Columbia disc of the same work (conducted by Beecham) appears in its proper place under the title *Air de Ballet*.

It should have been made clear to the reader that Handel's *Oboe Sonata in E* is the same work as the *Violin Sonata in E*.

The various arrangements of Rachmaninov's *C sharp minor Prelude, Op. 3, No. 2*, appear under Op. 23, No. 7.

The reader is led to believe that Sibelius' songs are all sung in Finnish, although almost all of them are sung in Swedish.

Turina's *Ensueno* and *Orgia* are from *Danzas Fantásticas*, and not from *Femmes d'Espagne*.

If the hopelessly muddled situation of the Mozart quartets prevail elsewhere in the listing of his music, this section of the Encyclopedia will prove utterly useless. For the sake of the record, let us examine the listings of Mozart's quartets. The editor's wish to include the divertimenti Koechel 136 and 138 among the quartets, because they are scored for four strings and are so listed in Cobbett's, has led him astray in numbering these works. Actually Mozart's quartets numbers 2 and 4 are, according to Einstein, the works Koechel numbers 155 and 157. The Minuetto that the Kreiner Quartet played on the odd

record face in Victor set 393 is from Koechel 173; it is placed here under Koechel 428. *The Quartet No. 11 in E flat*, played by the Kreiner Quartet (Friends of Recorded Music), is Koechel 171; it is erroneously listed under Koechel 387. The Perolé Quartet performance of the *Quartet in D minor, Koechel 421*, is listed under Koechel 464. The Pro Arte Quartet performance of Koechel 428 is incorrectly included under Koechel 465. The latter work is marked in one place as quartet No. 19 and in another place as quartet No. 22; it is listed in Koechel as No. 19. Lastly, the Budapest performance of Koechel 458 (Victor 763) is also listed in error under Koechel 499.

These citations should be enough to warn the reader of the necessity of checking before taking all the printed information as gospel.

The type used for the main entries is an improvement over that of the previous edition, although the separation of sub-entries from main entries is not in all cases as clear as it might be.

With all its defects, it still remains the most extensive book of its kind in the English language; and, as such, it will undoubtedly find a place on the shelves of all true gramophiles.

—Henry S. Gerstlé.

THE RECORD JAZZ BOOK. By Charles Edward Smith, with Frederic Ramsey, Jr., William Russell, and Charles Payne Rogers. Smith & Durrell, Inc., New York, N. Y. 515 pp. Price \$3.50.

▲ At first glance, this might appear to be an unnecessarily redundant work since all the authors were also responsible for that very fine book, *Jazzmen*, published three years ago, which covered the subject of jazz and its creators very thoroughly and effectively. In fact, the first part of this new book follows, in general, the plan and purpose of its predecessors. But there the similarity ends. The first part of this book is much more concisely written. It covers, in 125 pages, all that was covered in *Jazzmen's* 360 pages. It gives a clearer picture, without froth and rhapsody, of the background and beginnings of jazz, the growth of its various styles,

and the people who were responsible for its creation and nurture. Even a non-jazz-enthusiast can read this new book and feel that he has gained a sensible and true perspective of this special, American musical dialect in relation to American music in general. To the rabid jazz enthusiast most of this is old stuff but he cannot fail to admire the way it is all so well told.

The rest of the 515 pages is a guide for anyone who wants to supplement his reading with actual examples. No attempt has been made to make a discography in the manner of Panassié's *Hot Jazz Discography*, Schleman's *Rhythm on Record*, or Darrell's *Encyclopedia of Recorded Music*. Quite frankly, it is patterned after David Hall's *The Record Book* and therein lies its greatest weakness. The brief comments are highly personal opinions often open to argument. The non-jazz-enthusiast will find these comments sometimes puzzling, because of their special language, and sometimes boring and su-

perficial. Jazzists, who know and respect the authors, will find the comments interesting and often illuminating. Neophytes will find in them a valuable guide. But if this latter part of the book is used by all, regardless of pet personal opinions, as the authors intended it — as a guide to building a good, representative, jazz record library — it will more than repay its purchase price to its readers with the money saved by not buying valueless records.

Suggestion for future editions: a glossary of jazz words and terms. Expressions like "screwy breaks", "airshot", "jive", "powerhouse", "gut-pucket", "rock", "jam", "ride", "riff" have special meanings to the jazz cognoscenti only.

Suggestion number two: this book will make a good Christmas gift for one who already has the Panassié, the Schleman, the Hobson, and *Jazzmen* on his bookshelf. It will help to make his jazz bookshelf more complete.

— Enzo Archetti

A SELECTED ALBUM OF CHOPIN RECORDS

Requests from a number of readers for our recommendations of twelve recordings by Chopin, to be housed in an album of the buyer's choice, has resulted in the following list. Selections were made by Mr. Kenneth Hieber, who wrote the article on Chopin recordings in our November issue, and the editor.

1. *Mazurkas in C minor, Op. 56, No. 3; in A minor, Op. 59, No. 1; and in C major, Op. 56, No. 2.* Artur Rubinstein. Victor disc 17295 (from set 691). (1940)
2. *Nocturnes in E flat, Op. 9, No. 2 and in D flat major, Op. 27, No. 2.* Moritz Rosenthal. Victor disc 14297 (from set 338). (1936)
3. *Waltzes in E flat, Op. 18 and in A flat major, Op. 34, No. 1.* Alexander Brailowsky. Victor disc 18383 (from set 863). (1941)
4. *Impromptu in A flat major, Op. 29 and in F sharp major, Op. 36.* Alfred Cortot. Victor disc 8238. (Circa 1932)
5. *Preludes 1 to 6, Op. 28.* Egon Petri. Columbia disc 71402-D (from set 523). (1942)
6. *Etudes in E flat major, Op. 10, No. 11; in G sharp minor, Op. 25, No. 6; and in B minor, Op. 25, No. 10.* Joseph Lhevinne. Victor disc 8868. (1936)
7. and 8. *Fantasy in F minor, Op. 49; and Tarentelle in A flat minor, Op. 43.* Alfred Cortot. Victor discs 8250/51. (Circa 1933)
9. *Polonaise in F sharp minor, Op. 44.* Artur Rubinstein. Victor disc 14284 (from set 353). (1937)
10. *Scherzo in E flat, Op. 54.* Vladimir Horowitz. Victor disc 14634. (1937)
11. *Berceuse in D flat major, Op. 57, and Ecosaises, Op. 72.* Alexander Brailowsky. Victor disc 15382. (1940)
12. *Ballade in F minor, Op. 52.* Alfred Cortot. Victor disc 14564. (1937)

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OVERTONES

During October and November, the following recordings were issued in England.
BRAHMS: *Hungarian Dance No. 12*; and

LOCATELLI: *Labyrinth*; Yehudi Menuhin (violin) and Ferguson Webster (piano). H.M.V. DA1636.

CHOPIN: *Nocturne in D flat, Op. 27, No. 2* and *Berceuse, Op. 57*; Solomon (piano). H.M.V. C3308.

DELIUS: *Légende in E flat*; Henry Holst (violin) and Gerald Moore (Piano). Columbia DX1094.

HANDEL: *Water Music Suite*; Hallé Orchestra, direction Sargent. H.M.V. C3306/07.

HANDEL: *Where'er You Walk*; and MENDELSSOHN: *Be Thou Faithful unto Death*; Webster Booth (tenor) and Hallé Orch. H. M. V. C3305.

MOZART: *Marriage of Figaro* — Say goodbye now to pastime and play; and VERDI: *Traviata* — From fair Provence; Dennis Noble (tenor) with Hallé Orch. H.M.V. C3304.

MOZART: *Fantasie and Fugue in C major, K. 394*; Denis Matthews (piano). Columbia DX1095.

MOZART: *Ob! What bitter grief is mine*, and *Ave Verum* (arr. Schmidt); John McCormack (tenor) with Gerald Moore (piano). H.M.V. DA1828.

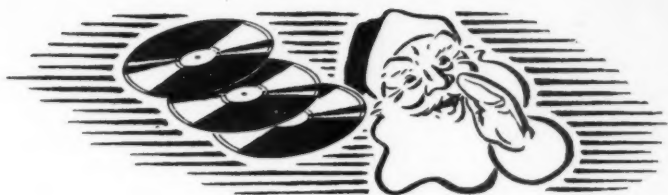
SCHUBERT: *Impromptu in A flat, Op. 90, No. 4*; Louis Kentner (piano). Columbia DX1093.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36*; Lambert and Hallé Orchestra. Columbia DX1096/1100.

WAGNER: *Die Meistersinger—Preislied*; and GOUNOD: *Faust—Salut, demeure* (both sung in English); Webster Booth (tenor) with Hallé Orch. H.M.V. C3309.

WARLOCK: *Fair and True*, and *Piggessie*; Roy Henderson (baritone) with Gerald Moore (piano). Decca M519.

WILLIAMS: *Linden Lea*; and BAX: *I heard a piper piping*; Astra Desmond (contralto) with Gerald Moore (piano). Decca M522.



RECORD NOTES AND

REVIEWS

It is the purpose of this department to review monthly all worthwhile recordings. If at any time we happen to omit a record in which the readers is particularly interested, we shall be glad to give our opinion of the recording on written request. Correspondents are requested to enclose self-addressed stamped envelopes.

We believe that record buyers would do well to order by title rather than by number such items as they may wish to purchase. Numbers are sometimes printed incorrectly in our sources.

All prices given are without tax.

Orchestra

BEETHOVEN: *Minuet in G*; *Country Dance No. 1*; and BACH: *Air from Suite No. 3*; *Bourrée* from solo cello *Suite No. 3*; played by the Columbia Broadcasting Symphony, conducted by Howard Barlow. Columbia disc 71411-D, price \$1.00.

▲ Here are four "popular classics", as the sponsors of this disc term the pieces, rather arbitrarily strung together. Three of the pieces are presented in arrangement, but the transcriber's name is omitted from the label. This sort of thing is not a good policy, since a recording is more or less permanent and everything pertaining to the origin of the music should be included on the label. Columbia is strangely

remiss in such matters; it consistently omits opus numbers from its catalogues and its records; thus in the recording of the Beethoven *Eighth Symphony*—issued this month — the opus number is not included on the cover, in the notes or on the record labels. It is the duty of a record company to give all data of this kind on its label, as well as in its notes.

The Bach experts here are strange bed-fellows; the composers never intended that they should be played together. Moreover, there is a suggestion in Barlow's quickened tempo of the gracious *Air* from the *Suite in D major* that things were hurried to include the short arrangement of the *Bourrée* from the unaccompanied cello suite. No repeats are made in the *Air*, and this and the quickened tempo does not help to substantiate the restrained beauty of the music. Otherwise the orchestral playing is competently realized. The *Minuet in G* has more charm and volatility when played on the violin, but the *Country Dance* (originally for piano) is quite effective in this orchestral arrangement.

After listening to the many versions of the *Air* on records, we've come to the conclusion that one of the best single disc performances is that made by Charles O'Connell and the Victor Symphony Orchestra. The conductor's honest, unaffected musicianship is most commendable; he is more honestly observant of Bach's

intentions than are Stokowski and Barlow. But in these days of quickened pulses it may be that some listeners will find the present version quite to their liking. As orchestral playing and recording go, you can hardly go wrong on a Barlow-Columbia Symphony disc. — P. H. R.

BEEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 8 in F major, Op. 93*; played by the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York, direction of Bruno Walter. Columbia set M or MM-525, three discs, price \$3.50.

▲ After the *Seventh Symphony*, Beethoven's *Eighth* proved anticlimactic with the Viennese. It seems strange that people could at one time have held this work so lightly. As I said in my review of the Toscanini performance in the August issue, perhaps no music that Beethoven wrote induces a greater sense of well-being than this symphony. And it is this well-being which inevitably makes the music a joy in repetition, for there are too few great works which convey so consistent and unfettered a sense of cheer.

As a recording this performance is far more brilliant than was the Beecham set of last month. In the Beecham set there was, however, a certain mellowness of tone quality quite unlike anything Columbia had achieved in its previous recordings of the Philharmonic. This one returns to the more blatant and hard brightness of the Barbirolli and other Walter recordings. My first playing of the recording left me somewhat dissatisfied with its qualities, but a second playing proved that old adage that almost all recordings improve with one or two playings. What seemed at first like distortion in the brasses and lower strings disappeared in the second playing. I only mention this so that a listener who is impressed with Walter's reading will not be too critical of the recording until he has played the discs several times.

In the past twelve years there have been seven performances of the *Eighth Symphony* by reputable conductors, and one by an unnamed conductor. This latter can be dismissed, since it is all too apparent that the performance was unre-

hearded prior to recording. The first set was by Hans Pfitzner and the Berlin Philharmonic (Polydor); it dates from about 1929. The second, dating from late in 1930, was played by Franz Schalk and the Vienna Philharmonic. The Pfitzner performance seemed heavy-handed to me; the Schalk, on the other hand, I still own and like. Franz Schalk (1863-1931) was a noted Viennese conductor of the old school; he was a pupil of Anton Bruckner. Schalk's reading is solid, dramatic, but not heavy-handed; it lacks some of the buoyancy and grace which the Toscanini reading contains, but there is a warmth and fervor to the playing and moreover a logical and unswerving unfolding of the entire work which engenders respect for his abilities as a conductor. Victor released this recording once in its educational series without an album (discs 9342, 9640-41).

Next comes the performance by Sir Adrian Boult and the B.B.C. Orchestra (Victor set 181); this was made in the fall of 1932 and released in this country in mid-1933. The English conductor has always been an admirable musician, but he is somewhat phlegmatic. One of Boult's best characteristics, however, is his thinking in long phrases; no chopping up with him. It was this trait that made his reading of the *Eighth* an appreciable one. In April 1937, Victor released its recording of the *Eighth* by Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony, and the same month Columbia issued the Weingartner-Vienna Philharmonic performance; this latter was made however, some six months or more earlier. I cannot agree with those who contend that there is little to distinguish Koussevitzky's conception of this work from Weingartner's, or that his orchestra is superior to the Vienna Philharmonic. The superiority lies in the recording, for Victor has a more notably clean definition in its set than the Viennese engineers were able to acquire in that put forward by Columbia. Koussevitzky's reading is extremely brilliant, a little on the fast side. Such virtuoso treatment of the score is more satisfying in the concert hall than it is to live with. Whereas Koussevitzky sharply etches every line and

phrase, Weingartner shapes them more genially. One feels that the veteran Dalmatian breathes more freely than his Russian contemporary. He realizes the robustness and graciousness of the music in a wholly equitable manner; it is a performance which one finds compensating over a long period of time.

As for the Toscanini performance, it is in my estimation quite unapproached by any other reading. My only regret is that the recording was not obtained under more favorable circumstances than Studio 8-H in Radio City permitted at the time it was made. (Studio 8-H has since been rebuilt and its tonal qualities are no longer hard.)

And now we come to Walter's performance. Walter is more concerned with drama than I like; there is not the differentiation of moods which Toscanini obtains, the yielding to graciousness and lyricism. I recall some lines by my English colleague, W. R. Anderson: "Life isn't merely pace. Life is a subtlety of balance and interplay in rhythm and phrasing." There is an admirable firmness in Walter's playing, an unmistakable enthusiasm, but the drive lacks the plasticity of mood and phrase which I have heard Walter obtain upon other occasions. Moreover, the playing of the Philharmonic lacks the flexibility, the joy and ardor which we hear from an orchestra that is consistently directed by one conductor. On the other hand, the orchestra responds to and plays better for Walter here than it did in the recording of the *Fifth Symphony*. Although there is a tightness in the playing, it is fortunately not a rhythmical tautness. The fact that Walter has received the most vital and compelling reproduction to date will naturally be in his favor. The listener is enjoined to hear the several sets of this work before he purchases one. If, however, he is unconcerned with the subtleties of interpretation and only interested in acquiring the best recording, he does not need to turn elsewhere; it is to be found here.

—P. H. R.

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RAVEL: *Daphnis et Chloë — Second Suite*; played by the Cleveland Orchestra, direction of Artur Rodzinski. Columbia set X or MX-230, two discs, price \$2.50.

▲ This is a fourth recording. The first was the Koussevitzky-Boston Symphony set, which dates from 1929; the second was the Gaubert-Straram Orchestra version which came a couple of years later; and the third is, of course, the recent Ormandy-Philadelphia Orchestra performance (July, 1940). Koussevitzky has a flare for this music; his performance is both opulent and zestful, full of an imaginative interplay of instrumental coloring. But alas, the recording is badly outdated, and the diffusion of sound in the lower

section of the orchestra leaves a great deal to be desired. Gaubert's version, although of later vintage, does not succeed in clarifying the score any better; moreover, its dynamic range is insufficient. Ormandy gives a brilliant account of the score, and with modern recording fares far better than his predecessors. But Ormandy has little sense of the subtlety or polish that Koussevitzky attains.

Rodzinski does a better job than Ormandy, and with its fine recording his performance proves the most satisfying. Although he does not achieve the vivid coloration that Koussevitzky obtains, he brings to his reading other qualities, which in my estimation are equally admirable. Unlike Ormandy, who tends to cut the score up into sections, Rodzinski keeps the music continuously flowing; his is a sense of long lines. Furthermore, Rodzinski's treatment is more lyrically poetic, and hence more delicately nuanced. Koussevitzky builds bigger climaxes, but Rodzinski never disturbs the lyricism, although he achieves climactic effects.

The remarks that Mr. Schonberg made about the difficulty of recording a score of this kind (in his review of the Ormandy set), can be repeated here. As fine as this recording is, the full wealth of orchestral nuance, all the subtle gradations of instrumental values are by no means fully achieved. It is doubtful that they could be, since the monitoring still necessary in modern recording takes so much from a score of this kind. But we can be happy for the tonal gradations that are conveyed here, and the fine quality of the reproduction in general.

There is a program to this work, but it is not essential for us to know it to enjoy the music. Ravel has nowhere created more exquisite music, more ravishing harmonic effects, or shown himself more poetically imaginative. One would know without being told that the opening is a picture of awakening morn, that later there is a general rejoicing of pastoral characters in the light of day. The finale is, of course, a general dance in the ballet, a scene of tumultuous joy.

—P. H. R.

STRAUSS: *Don Quixote, Opus 35*; played by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, direction of Fritz Reiner with Gregor Piatigorsky (solo cellist) and Henri Temianka (solo violist). Columbia set M or MM-506, five discs, price \$5.50.

▲ Columbia can be justly proud of this album set. It is one of the finest orchestral recordings, in our estimation, that the company has put forth; and what is more important, it is a salient and illuminating performance of a rich score. Reiner explores the heights and depths of this work with imaginative brilliance and intelligence and with thorough technical resourcefulness. Piatigorsky's contribution, a most important one, since the work borders closely on a concerto for the cello and orchestra, is equally persuasive. In such pages as "The Knight's Vigil" and "The Defeat of the Knight" — those final pages in which the composer has so poignantly and expressively outlined his hero's disillusionment and death — the lyrical beauty of Piatigorsky's cello is heard to particular advantage.

In his valuable book on records, Kolodin observes that the cello is excessively loud in the Feuermann-Ormandy performance, that it has been treated by the microphones virtually "as a solo rather than an integral part of the musico-dramatic texture created by Strauss". However, Kolodin continues, "it is he who imparts the essential distinction to this performance, which is, aside from the superb recording, not impressively eloquent or discerning". Piatigorsky is not similarly featured in this performance; his cello submerged upon occasion where Strauss intended that it should be, but where it is supposed to dominate the scene it does so in a happier manner than did Feuermann's instrument. No one will deny that Feuermann brought eloquence to his playing; yet he did not achieve the same degree of lyrical cantilena which Piatigorsky does, perhaps because his instrument was unduly amplified. Despite these observations the Feuermann-Ormandy performance cannot be lightly dismissed. It is one of the major souvenirs of that great instrumentalist who was cut off so

unfortunately at the height of his career; and further, it is a Philadelphia Orchestra recording of the first magnitude, and this in itself assures a listener who enjoys the realism of a great orchestra in reproduction considerable compensation. The question of whose cello is the more satisfactory is a debatable one; there are those who agree with Kolodin as regards the part this instrument plays in the score, and others who contend that the work is virtually a cello concerto. Actually, the instrument is used both ways, and it is a disconcerting conductor and cellist who observe this fact. One should not forget that the solo viola also plays a prominent part in the score, and here we can pay Henri Temianka a compliment for his handling of the viola part. The music of Sancho Panza may not be as gratifying to play as is the music allotted to the Don, but it is important nevertheless. And Temianka fully realizes this.

The essential difference between the interpretations of Ormandy and Reiner, to my way of thinking, lies in the handling of detail. The former has a tendency to magnify the unimportant with the result that the important does not always emerge with the essential salience it deserves. The interested reader has but to listen to those interesting pages of the finale; Reiner is more successful here in making us realize the true benignity, humility and solacing peace of the music.

The reader may be interested in a short summation of the four versions of this work that have appeared on records. Beecham's splendid version, with Alfred Wallenstein as soloist, appeared in 1930. Wallenstein does not emerge from this recording auspiciously; the tone of his instrument is lusterless and the subtleties of Beecham's fine-grained reading are hardly done justice to by the two-dimensional recording. The Polydor set, made by the Berlin Philharmonic under the direction of the composer, which dates from a couple of years later, was an admirably self-possessed reading, but the only version of it we heard (pressed on Brunswick discs) was scarcely enjoyable because of the rough surfaces of the records. Furthermore, the solo cellist was not as proficient as either Feuermann or Piatigorsky. The Philadelphia Orchestra set dates from January, 1941.

—P. H. R.

Concerto

BEETHOVEN: *Concerto No. 4 in G major, Op. 58*; played by Artur Schnabel piano and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, direction of Frederick Stock. Victor set DM-930, four discs, price \$4.50.

▲ This set contains some of the most remarkable piano playing I have ever heard. Schnabel emerges from his rec-



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ording in a far more telling manner than he did in his previous version of this work. In my estimation, there is a rare combatibility of temperament between Frederic Stock and the pianist. One observes this instantly with the entrance of the orchestra after the quiet cantabile statement of the principal theme by the pianist. Stock takes his cue from Schnabel, and one is aware of a rare affinity of style and feeling. How much of this was worked out ahead does not concern us; what does concern us is its realization. In his 1933 recording made with Malcolm Sargent and the London Philharmonic, Schnabel did not have as congenial a conductor. This is no disparagement of Sargent, who gave the pianist excellent support and on his own provided a musicianly exposition of the orchestral part of the score. But Sargent is an English musician, and Stock was of German birth. And the pianist, being of Austrian origin, has a similar understanding of the Teutonic sentiment and feeling in the music. Because of this, and because Victor had planned to have the pianist and Stock rerecord all the Beethoven concerti, it is unfortunate that the conductor was not able to realize this work before his untimely death.

The most memorable piano playing that I ever heard was that of Busoni. When I state that Schnabel here recalls Busoni, I am sure I pay him the highest compliment. Particularly is this true in the opening movement. For, with the aid of reproduction that is superior to that of his first performance on records, this recording reveals much in Schnabel's playing which I have not been able to apprehend in the earlier version. True, most of this lies in the opening movement, but nonetheless the other movements gain by modern recording.

It was in my late 'teens that I became familiar with the piano playing of Busoni, and had the pleasure of knowing him in an intimate manner. At that time I lived beneath Natalie Curtis, who was a close friend of Busoni's and who furnished him with thematic material for more than one of his works. It was Miss Curtis who made me aware of Busoni's

extraordinary resources and executive grandeur. Busoni's energy was prodigious, yet it was discreet and unassuming. In the passage work of such scores as this, and of the fifth concerto of Beethoven, Busoni's ability to contrast the fortissimi with the diminuendo and pianissimi was astonishing. Someone has said that Busoni played with an artistic disdain for mere physical effect; there was an ever-refining radiance in his handling of passage work as well as of thematic material. It is something of this same approach to and handling of the music here in the opening movement which Schnabel conveys to me. His tone is illuminated, filled with a subtlety of shading which was not evidenced in the earlier recording. The same technical facility of execution, however, is not consistently present in Schnabel's playing; his trills, for example, lack the precision and refinement of his predecessor's, and frequently his octave playing does not give evidence of an infallible technician. But his performance of this first movement is nonetheless a great achievement; one from which I feel certain I shall derive the utmost satisfaction as time goes on. One has but to listen to Schnabel's poetic statement of the principal theme, and then listen to Gieseeking's, to realize that the former has more feeling for and understanding of the opening movement. There is much to be said for Gieseeking's more flexible treatment of the finale, but only in this movement do I find him preferable.

The contrast between the piano and the orchestra, so essential to a telling performance of the slow movement, is splendidly achieved here. Tovey points out that Liszt compared this movement to Orpheus taming the wild beasts with his music. Liszt's observation was occasioned by the feeling that the piano part here gradually masters the orchestral part. Beethoven has created an unusual dramatic effect in his slow movement. The piano part is all poetry, the orchestral section is dramatic recitative gradually falling away in favor of the solo instrument. It all happens so quickly that we hardly realize upon a first acquaintance the significance of the short movement, even though we may

be aware of the passing of an imposing interlude.

The finale is played with brilliancy and aplomb by the pianist, but not with the same luminous brightness that is found in the first movement. The cantabile phrases of the rondo are, to be sure, played with fine feeling, but the merely technical phrases — those which Mr. Schonberg referred to as sparkling finger work — are rendered with an almost unyielding hardness of tone. One can not deny the effectiveness of the playing, the spontaneity of the execution, yet the rendition in these passages does not suggest more than a cognizance of mere material effect. It is in this type of pianistic work, in my estimation, that the purely scholarly aspects of Schnabel's artistry are less felicitously revealed. The orchestra in the finale is warmly resplendent at all times. And since the tonal qualities of the orchestra are unusually fine, and the balance between solo instrument and ensemble are judiciously handled, one finds — despite the above remarks — this the most satisfying version of the movement on records. There is no question that Stock provided the best orchestral part so far on records, and furthermore that Victor has provided the finest reproduction.

This concerto in the long run remains the most satisfying that Beethoven wrote. Its lyrical beauty, its perfect plastic proportions, with the rare interplay of cantabile and executive radiance, are more rewarding in repetition to my way of thinking, than the heroics of the fifth concerto.

—P. H. R.

Chamber Music

MOZART: *Quintet in G minor, K. 516;* played by the Budapest Quartet with M. Katims, second viola. Columbia set M or MM-526, four discs, price \$4.50.

▲ Last month we had the lovely Schubert Trio, Op. 99, superbly played by three great artists. This month we have one of the greatest works that Mozart wrote superbly played by the Budapest ensemble and Mr. Katims. Chamber music enthusiasts have much for which to be grate-

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ful. At the time when most of the choice chamber music material on records is being withdrawn from the record catalogues (whether for good or merely for the duration, we are not told), it is good to have two outstanding scores like these brought to us in such magnificent performances.

There have been three versions of this extraordinarily expressive score on records to date. The first, issued in 1930, was played by the Lener Quartet and L. d'Oliveira (Columbia set 150). The second, issued in 1932, was performed by the Pro Arte Quartet and Alfred Hoday (Victor set 270). The former was an admirable performance in many ways; emotionally it was more persuasive in some ways than the latter, but the balance of the ensemble was disturbed by the all too predominant tone of the first violinist. Neither the depth of the emotion nor the tonal breadth of the score was completely realized by the Pro Arte ensemble. I have often striven to outline

in words why I did not regard the Pro Artes as the ideal players of the music of Haydn and Mozart. In a comparison of their performance of this work with that of the Budapest group, the reason is all too apparent. It is evident that the Pro Arte group adopt tempos calculated to preserve a technical polish while the Budapest ensemble adopt tempos which are based on the expression of the emotional qualities of the music. Hence the Pro Artes employ slower tempos in all quick movements. One cannot accuse the Budapests of not achieving technical finish, but this is only a means to an end with them. The Pro Artes' Gallic suavity and polish fit the music of Ravel and Debussy better than it does Haydn and Mozart. And yet the ensemble's playing of these two composers can be enjoyed, but as time goes on one may very well find oneself continually wishing that such finished artistry as theirs included a greater degree of emotional depth. At least it has seemed so to me.

The quickened tempo of the Budapests in the opening movement sustains the passion and imagination of the music's content. Roismann's less polished violin tone brings out the dolor of the mood better than Onnou's more lustrous tone and Lener's all too cloying sound. What problems lay behind the music's construction each of us can conjecture if he wishes, or we may accept the music simply for its own sake. Elsewhere in the magazine, Sidney Grew gives us his reactions to the whole quintet.

Only in the minuet do I regard the Pro Arte ensemble superior to the present group. In the slower tempo adopted, a tempo quite in keeping with the marking in the score, the Pro Artes are enabled to probe deeper, emotionally. The interplay of minor and major which Mozart uses here is extremely subtle, and the chromaticism when played less fast has more meaning. One English critic (Samuel Langford) has observed that Mozart "takes the minor cadence of the main

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VIEWS AND REVIEWS

QUARTERLY BOOK-LIST

QUARTERLY RECORD-LIST

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"By far the most important of the American periodicals from the point of view of musical scholarship is the *Musical Quarterly*. It is a serious review, cosmopolitan in character, and has published valuable contributions from most of the leading writers of music in Europe and America."—*Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*

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section and, by one of the slightest turns imaginable, turns it to such an exquisite major subject that for very tenderness and joy it brings the tears to the eyes. Joy, says Keats, 'whose hand is ever at his lips, bidding adieu' — that is the very exact description of the way in which Mozart turns over and over this exquisite cadential phrase."

No ensemble has done greater justice to the slow movement, one of the most poignantly moving that Mozart ever wrote. The almost cathedral-like beauty of the opening is rarely sustained. There is an exquisite hush in the subdued beauty of tone obtained here — the unbroken mood of the deeply felt and grief-touched music. The dynamics are exquisitely shaded; such markings are *sforzando* and *crescendo* are implied, not over-accentuated. Here Roismann's tone is rightfully velvety smooth.

The opening of the finale is beautifully molded. This passage recalls *The Magic Flute* in its profoundest moments, whereas the allegro which follows has a Papageno-like levity. There is more gaiety in the playing here of the ever-controversial final allegro than we heard in either of the previous performances. If one accepts Grew's contention that the expected death of Mozart's father stimulated the composition of this work, it would be but natural to assume that this finale might have grown out of thoughts that the patient would recover from his illness. All of which will be relevant to the music, according to how direct we believe was the relation between the composer's life and his music.

The recording is lacking in the intimacy of mood which distinguished the Pro Arte set and the H. M. V. recordings of the Budapests. In the first two play-

ings I was dissatisfied with the qualities of the middle and upper registers, but a third playing found the disturbing elements practically eliminated. On my own set, employing three speakers — high, middle and woofer, I was able to work out a highly satisfying balance of tone. On a commercial set, using one speaker, the quality after the third playing was also satisfactory. In my opinion, the recording here is better than that obtained in the Schubert *Quintet in C major*. — P. H. R.

BRAHMS-JOACHIM: *Hungarian Dance No. 2 in D minor*; and **RIMSKY-KORSAKOV** (arr. Hartmann): *The Flight of the Bumble Bee*; played by Nathan Nathan Milstein (violin) with Arthur Balsam (piano). Columbia 10-inch disc 17352-D, price 75c.

▲ Rimsky's bee has a way of buzzing around where you least expect it. We are tempted to ask — was it necessary, Mr. Milstein? But Mr. Milstein has a way with a fiddle and a bow and if others continue to keep that ubiquitous bee buzzing around then assuredly he too has a right to do so. Needless to say, he plays it faultlessly. We have the feeling that this disc would be the perfect Christmas gift for our old friend Jack Benny.

Listening to Milstein's fine performance of the all-too familiar *Hungarian Dance*, we are reminded of a passage in a letter from Mr. Henry Schwartz of the

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University of Michigan. "Hearing Milstein a while ago playing the Goldmark concerto," writes Mr. Schwartz, "I wondered afresh at the extraordinary virility, brilliance, vitality and unaffected sincerity of his playing, with a tone that is like ecstasy under control. Since the Goldmark is unrecorded, I wish he would do this very agreeable work for preservation. Milstein reminded me by his performance how much pleasure one can derive even from a minor work when it is performed with the superb virtuosity that transcends the music, just as the music of Schubert's songs transcends their poetic texts". The qualities our correspondent finds in Milstein's playing of Goldmark are present here also. The recording is excellently contrived as regards tone and balance.

—P. G.

Voice

CHOPIN: *Prayer for Poland* (setting of *Prelude No. 15 in D major*); and MACZEWSKI: *On Your Lips of Coral*; both sung in Polish by Jan Kiepura (tenor) with piano accompaniments by Wolfgang Rebner and Otto Terz. Columbia disc 71412-D, price \$1.00

▲ The so-called *Dew-Drop Prelude* of Chopin is given a meretricious treatment by some unnamed arranger here, and sung with exaggerated sadness by Kiepura. The song of Maczewski is an effusive sentimental extravagance which the tenor sings

with more enthusiasm than artistic style. In times like these, when so few records are made available to a truly record-minded public, it seems a shame to have this type of material issued. But maybe we're wrong; maybe Mr. Kiepura has his public, and maybe anything he does is quite satisfactory to it.

—P. G.

ROGERS: *The Star*; CRAXTON: *Come You, Mary*; and BRANSEN: *There Shall Be Music When You Come*; sung in English by Lauritz Melchior (tenor) with piano accompaniment by Ignace Strasfogel. Columbia 10-inch disc 17-353-D, price 75c.

▲ Though these songs have found favor with amateur singers and professionals, and they are definitely popular sellers, we still think they are tawdry material for an artist of Melchior's standing to use when record material is so scarce. The truly great songs by American composers are shamefully neglected by the singers of our time.

Melchior's accent is hardly conducive to complete enjoyment of such a song as the Rogers or the Bransen. Indeed, his difficulty with several English words in *The Star* vitiates the quality of his singing. Only in *Come You, Mary* is the tenor artistically felicitous. The robust, masculine quality of his voice just doesn't seem to fit the other songs; they belong to more lyrical singers. Ignace Strasfogel gives the tenor competent support and the recording is good.

—P. G.

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